
Best Practice Fact Sheet – Workforce Development READY TO WORK (RTW) - Kentucky

Program

Description: Provides work study jobs, support services and on-site academic/employment counseling to help TANF clients pursue post-secondary degrees and credentials. Kentucky allows 24 (instead of 12) months of vocational education and 20 (instead of 19) hours of work study.

Target Population: TANF clients

Goal: To help clients get post-secondary credentials and degrees at 2-year colleges

Cost: Annual cost - \$10.8 million for SFY 2010 (including \$7.7 million for work-study)

Evidence: June 2004 longitudinal study by Kentucky Legislative Research Commission

Caseload Data: Annual enrollment about 2,000 clients

Assessment: Screened and assessed by case managers (RTW coordinators)

Services Overview:

- Key services include work study jobs, support services, and academic and employment counseling by on-site case managers (RTW coordinators)
- 35 full time RTW coordinators serve 16 colleges.

Eligibility: Participant must be TANF client.

Findings:

- A 2004 longitudinal study found that RTW and other job skills education participants had the highest entering employment rate, highest 4th quarter job retention rate, and highest average annual wage (by over \$3,500), compared to former participants in other TANF work activities.
- Since the spring of 2001, 1,427 RTW and former RTW Students have completed 2-year college and about half have continue their education. The fall of 2006-7 RTW retention rate was 70%.
- With RTW, the percentage of Kentucky's TANF population attending college (8.7%) is higher than for the regular population.

Implications for Policymakers and Program Developers to Consider:

- TANF policies key to RTW success that distinguish Kentucky from other states:
 - allowing 24 months of stand-alone vocational education (despite 12 month federal limit);
 - state law requiring TANF recipients be periodically informed of education/training options (not only on application for assistance); and
 - work study rules that allow for 20 hours instead of 19, eliminating the need for an additional "core" activity. (Kentucky can allow 20 hours work study because it remains below the 100 hours per month threshold for state employee retirement benefits, compared to 70 hours in WA.)
- Most parents who are not in full time vocational education, have 20 hours of work study per week complemented with continuing education until they complete the degree/certificate goal.
- Work study placements are both on and off campus at public and private locations; placements are resume building and connect parents with outside employment.

- RTW coordinators work closely with TANF case managers to recruit students for RTW, including attending TANF orientation sessions in some offices.

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